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National
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18 AUGUST 1978

IMAGERY INFORMATION REPORT

PREPARATIONS FOR UNIDENTIFIED TEST/EXPERIMENT AT SEMIPALATINSK DEGELEN MOUNTAIN TEST AREA, USSR (TSR)

(TSR) [] imagery acquired between early July and mid-August 1978 shows an area of unusual construction on the east edge of the Semipalatinsk Degelen Mountain Test Area. The construction was underway in and around a previously used test tunnel which has been recently reentered. Most of the features observed have never been seen before at a Soviet nuclear test site and apparently are for an unusual test or experiment of undetermined nature. This activity could involve the testing of a new type of weapon and/or a significant change in previously used testing techniques.

(TSR) The July—August imagery shows a long band of construction activity in front of the tunnel originating at adit 2q. This activity extends outward from the tunnel for approximately 460 meters. Most of the features appear to be on or near the azimuth of the projected tunnel route, which would allow for line of sight. The construction includes the enlargement of adit 2q and possibly the tunnel beyond; two sets of unoccupied concrete bases in front of the adit; four lattice gantries on concrete bases; several short upright members, possibly for a series of smaller gantries, also installed on concrete bases; a large graded area on which an earthen mound was being formed; and a trench system along the east side of the band of construction. []

(TSR) Adit 2q has been enlarged to a 9-meter width, approximately twice its original width. The enlargement of the adit and the presence of tunnel support buildings indicate that at least some portion of the tunnel beyond has also been widened; however, this cannot be confirmed by overhead imagery.

(TSR) All of the concrete bases observed were constructed in shallow excavations; the top surfaces of these bases appear to be level with the floor of the tunnel. All of the bases appear to be the same size, [] Using adit 2q as a reference point, the respective distances to the various bases are as follows: unoccupied single base, 33 meters; unoccupied pair of bases, 91 meters; gantry bases, 140 and 190 meters; and possible small gantry bases, 247 and 370 meters. The center of the graded area with the earthen mound is 459 meters from the adit.

(TSR) The four lattice gantries are in two rows of two each. The two gantries which are closer to the adit are directly in front of the other two. Each gantry is [] meters wide and [] high. The two rows are [] apart and, within each row, the gantries are 12 to 13 meters apart.

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(TSR) The graded area is on slightly rolling terrain which is being leveled, possibly to match the elevation of the tunnel. The earthen mound is being formed perpendicular to the projected tunnel route. By [] the mound resembled those used for the installation of radar; however, its final form may be that of a barricade or backstop. The trenching activity underway on [] consists of two parallel trenches extending from a point near adit 2q and along the east edge of the construction activity toward the graded area. Single trenches have been dug at right angles to extend into the vicinity of the gantries and to one of the short upright members. The trenches appear to be suitable for instrumentation cabling although none has yet been installed.

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(TSR) Although the current photographic evidence indicates that construction activity will probably continue for at least several weeks, the installation of cablelines from the adit to a forward recording site (FRS) was probably complete and the installation of cabling within the FRS was underway. The FRS is bracketed by an array of probable light poles 187 meters east of adit 2q. A second array of probable light poles is 260 meters northwest of the adit. This array may be used for additional instrumentation although no such installation has been started.

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(TSR) The current construction activity outside the adit was started between [] [] however, the apparent reentry of the tunnel, as indicated by the construction of new tunnel support and equipment storage buildings, was made between late December 1977 and mid-April 1978. The tunnel at adit 2q was previously used for a nuclear test in June 1968 and was dormant until the current activity began. The maximum available overburden of the peak above adit 2q is approximately 170 meters.

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(S) Comments and queries regarding this report are welcome. They may be directed to [] Soviet Strategic Forces Division, Imagery Exploitation Group, NPIC, [] or green extension []

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